

Application No.: 09/527,761

Docket No.: 21806-00085-US

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 37, 51, 57, 59, and 62 as follows:

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1. (Twice Amended) A semiconductor wafer, comprising:
a plurality of pits in the semiconductor wafer, the pits being arranged in a digital information-providing pattern,
said digital information-providing pattern being arranged in a pattern other than a bar code pattern,
said digital information-providing pattern being arranged and suitably adapted to be readable before, during and after completion of processing on the wafer.

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37. (Twice Amended) A method of encoding information on a semiconductor wafer, comprising:
converting the information into a digital form,
said digital form being a form other than a bar code pattern; and
forming pits suitable for being read before, during and after completion of processing on the wafer corresponding to the digital form of the information in the semiconductor wafer.

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51. (Twice Amended) A system for encoding information on a semiconductor wafer and reading the information, the system comprising:
a plurality of pits formed on the semiconductor wafer in a digital information-providing pattern, said digital information-providing pattern being a pattern other than a bar code pattern,
wherein the digital information-providing pattern is adapted and arranged to be readable before, during and after completion of processing on the wafer; and
means for reading the information encoded by the pits.

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57. (Amended) A semiconductor wafer, comprising:
a plurality of pits in the semiconductor wafer, the pits being arranged in a digital information-providing pattern,
said digital information-providing pattern being other than a bar code pattern,

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said digital information-providing pattern being readable before, during and after completion of processing on the wafer,

wherein the digital information-providing pattern is a non-binary coded pattern, and the plurality of pits comprise pits having at least three different shapes, and

wherein the at least three different shapes include a circle, an oval, and a rectangle.

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59. (Amended) The semiconductor wafer according to claim 58, wherein the non-binary coded pattern is a quaternary-coded pattern.

62. (Amended) A method of encoding information on a semiconductor wafer, comprising:

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converting the information into a digital form, said digital form being a form other than a bar code pattern; and

forming pits readable before, during and after completion of processing on the wafer corresponding to the digital form of the information in the semiconductor wafer,

wherein said step of forming pits includes forming pits in the shape of a circle, an oval, and a rectangle.